1:Sanders Z-5¼ (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[P.36]

III

The Village Setting

621 Part of the story of Greek survival lies in the village form of organization.
361 To be sure, the city has exercised a tremendous sway over the thought and
[369] mood of the Greek people in the past and even more so today. But a peasant's tangible world has been his village. We see the village first of all as a place with a focal point, or square, from which emanate streets, lanes, or paths winding in adjustment to the local surface features. As a place,
[491] the village has increasing connections with the outside world, since new
[487] roads continue to replace donkey tracks which until recently led from the more isolated areas.

But the village is also a service center where the farm family can shop or get some local artisan to make or repair household or farm equipment. In the rural areas of Greece, as elsewhere, these village services do not extend to waste disposal, this being the responsibility of the individual family. Viewed from another point, the village is a collection of houses, yards, and gardens, which also deserve a brief description if one is to see the backdrop against which so much of the peasant's daily life occurs.

621 In the village the rural Greek has found a pattern of life which gives him
[476] the many advantages of a close-knit community and at the same time allows
438 him to farm his land, exchange work and implements with his relatives or
[293] neighbors, sell his crops, and care for his animals in a common pasture, frequently under the care of a common swineherd or shepherd. Agricultural

1:Sanders Z-5,+ (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

public facilities can also be provided where the people are concentrated in villages.

Students of village life, in addition to deciding why settlements are found where they are, also try to describe the different shapes which the settlements assume. In Greece one finds a great many compact (nucleated) villages in which the lanes move in all directions from the central square and houses are built along these lanes. Another type, found, for instance, in the northern Peloponnesos between Corinth and Patras, is the line village which extends like a ribbon along some main highway and has little depth in either direction. Sometimes these line villages also follow a narrow river valley. In any event, the lay of the land contributes to the shape of the settlement, as well as to its aesthetic effect upon the passerby.

The Importance of Roads

One need not sit in the village square or around a fire in the main room of a peasant's house very long before learning that roads are important topics of conversation.[1] They loom large in the peasant's consciousness, revealing a growing desire on the part of the villagers for a rapid link with the outside. Their isolated world is breaking down, much to their joy, and they are feeling more and more a part of the body politic of Greece.

Today one can travel to most of the major towns of Greece on relatively narrow but high-speed, black-topped roads. Every few miles an all-weather gravel road leads off from these highways to serve a number of villages through which it winds; it also serves an even greater number connected with it by a road passable only in good weather or by a donkey track over which no motor vehicle can travel. Many familiar with the contribution of the American aid program to Greece maintain that, aside from the turning of the tide against the Communist guerrillas, the most lasting reminder of American help will be the greatly expanded road system. In Northern Greece, in particular, military roads are being constructed through areas which formerly were hours away from any contact with trucks or buses; and in all parts of Greece villagers through the "personal labor" program are building roads to connect their communities with some good highway not too far away.

Sensing the stress placed upon roads, we began to talk to people about the difference that a new road made to the villages it reached. Everywhere the testimony was much the same. One nomarch (or prefect) gave this explanation: "With a new road the state functions can be more immediately brought to the people. The new agricultural extension program can be taken to a village on a road and people can go to the center to talk to the officials. But there are more gradual changes as well: the peasant wants to improve his home because his wider travel helps him see a better life; he wants to keep his home cleaner."

1:Sanders Z-54 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

491 457 At times, one comes across an unusually good road system in what would at first seem to be an isolated area and learns, as in the case of the area south of Volos, that emigrants from these communities, who went to Egypt, sent back large sums of money for the construction of these roads, which were built at heavy cost per kilometer because of the great amount of masonry work needed. Near Xourichti, in this same area, we 443 came across a small unpadlocked building on the main road connected by a path with the village seen in the distance. We learned that this was the place where villagers left their money and orders for purchases desired from Volos. When a truck driver passed that way he would stop, pick up the money and the orders, and do the necessary shopping in Volos. When he came back he would leave the purchases in the little house, perhaps toot his horn or flash his lights, and people from the village would come to get [577] their new possessions. There were no thefts, no shortchanging, in this area of mutual trust where, before World War II, it was safe for a young woman to walk anywhere through the mountains at night unattended.

491 178 In Epirus, across Greece from this Volos area, life is lived in a different historical and physical setting. In order to learn what effect a new road had upon village people there, we went to the village of Tsepelovo. On August 20, 1952 — only a few months prior to our visit — the first automobile had arrived at the village, using the road that had been built to open up a large forest to be exploited for the people's benefit. As we sat in the office of the community council and talked to the village secretary, [494] we learned what the road had already accomplished for this village. The [804] first advantage mentioned was the lowered transportation costs, for the hauling charges per oka (2.8 pounds) by truck are only one fifth or one fourth of those by donkey. When pressed to give other results, the secretary put it this way:

[342] Now we can build homes with sand and cement; formerly it was too expensive to carry these in by animals. Formerly we built our stone houses with lime and mud as mortar, and that is why they tend to crumble so quickly.

[438] Here we produce about 14,000 okas (about 20 tons) of walnuts each year. We received little for them because of the transportation charges; now the merchant comes here in a truck and pays us cash and gives a higher price. Today we can also sell our lumber because, before the road came, we couldn't very well strap long boards to the donkeys.

[484] We used to spend twelve-and-a-half hours going by animal to Ioannina, the [735] only large city nearby. Now we do it in two-and-a-half hours by car. The grocer can sell fresh goods, whereas formerly he had only staples. Although we had great riches here, we also had great poverty so that beggars would go from house to house. The road reduces this inequality. Many of our men who had no other income earned much money working on the construction.

[758] In case we get sick we can be carried down by car and not have to ride a donkey.

1:Sanders Z-5,f (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

donkey. Now we[1] can get the Athens newspapers on the same day they are published, whereas before they would always be at least two days late and frequently more. We have no illiterates here, so many subscribe to these papers.

Considerable insight into what living on a good road means was gained from talking with mountain people who had been resettled in the lowlands away from their destroyed villages. One woman mentioned the advantages with little hesitation, beginning with the access to medical treatment mentioned above: "Here medical care is available because of the road. If a child gets appendicitis, he can get to a doctor in time; in our village up above he would have died. Also woman's work is lighter here. The children are better off. They can go to the school right here in the village whereas in our location up above they had to walk from two to three hours every day."

A commandant of police brought out some interesting examples of what a road means to a village by comparing his community, which got a road ten years before, with another community not far away which was not yet on a road:

The road brought many economic changes. For instance, my father had three hundred cherry trees which he had never bothered to fence in, prune, or tend in any way. Anybody could come and eat the fruit; they would break the branches. But when the road was built, my father fenced in the land and sold the cherries. The income began coming in. Also, it was a disgrace in our village to sell a chicken, but when the road came the women began to sell both eggs and chickens. This meant more income. Eggs in the village without a road sell for half the price obtained by the women in my village. This holds true for all products.

In the village without a road you would have a hard time finding a man with enough cash to buy a candle to light in church, while in my village people always seem to have some cash. In the other village each farmer needs a donkey for transportation and will spend about two thousand drachmas a year just for the upkeep of the donkey; in our village we do not need donkeys because we can use the trucks at much less expense.

Politically, too, roads make a difference. The candidates for parliament seldom get to the villages off the road but try to visit the rest; the same holds true for government officials in position to help in agriculture or other ways. They stick pretty much to the villages which they can easily reach.

The roads that lead into and out of the plateia do more than bring in the welcome buses, trucks, and occasional private cars; they bring in new services, new ideas, better teachers, and increased economic opportunities. People begin to feel that their village has moved from the shadow of isolation into the Greek sunlight.

[1] [i.e., the village of Tsepelovo - Analyst.]

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

more acutely and will find it harder to raise the level of living in many of the depressed areas of the country.

Land Use in Greece

What each peasant does with his own birthright of land adds up to the use Greece as a whole makes of her soil resources.[18] We may not be able to spot the patterns of ownership from observing the countryside, but we can see what is being grown and can check casual impressions against the official figures. Of 100 acres, 25 are used for agriculture, 15 are in forest, and the remaining 60 are in scrub, settlements, poor natural pasture, or just plain rock, gravel, or swamp. Roads, however, tend to take the observer through the areas where the land is cultivated and where many fields lie close together. In such areas, if we look only at the agricultural land, out of every 100 acres we would see 46 acres in grain, 5 in other food crops, 4 in industrial crops (cotton, tobacco, and so on), 25 in orchards and gardens, and 20 acres lying fallow. In the farm areas of the United States we would not find so high a proportion of fallow land, nor so much in orchards and gardens; instead, there would be more land in temporary meadows and in forage crops, because of our greater emphasis on livestock even though we have only about 27 acres out of each 100 in agricultural land, close to the Greek figure of 25. Our forest area takes up 32 acres (double that of Greece) and all other uses, 41 acres.

When we think of the land hunger of many Greeks, and the insufficient diet they get from their harvests, we wonder if there is any way to change these statistics. Is there more arable land available than 25 out of each 100 acres? Is there possibility of better use? Two studies, one Greek and one American, supply partial answers for those concerned about the peasant and his handful of earth.

Greece Today, a publication of the National Bank of Greece and Athens, in a 1954 article on Greek agriculture, points out that the available land is inadequately exploited owing to lack of funds. Only 7.8 percent of the agricultural land is irrigated; 11.5 percent is under mechanized cultivation; and chemical fertilizers, although used in twice the quantity of a few years ago, still cover not more than 25 percent of the cultivated land. Furthermore, when Greece is compared with 14 other European countries, the yield of Greek agriculture, expressed in gross income per unit of area, is 63 percent below, livestock production is 44 percent below, and the productivity of the labor of the Greek farmer is 48 percent below the respective average for these countries.

A study made by the American Mission for Aid to Greece indicates that much more efficient use could be made of the so-called idle lands, most of which are owned or administered by the state.[19] They were obtained in the population exchange of 1922–24, and from the Chams (*Tsamides* is

1:Sanders Z-5H (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Peloponnesos
[Shepherds]

children, pots and pans, donkeys, and a few articles of clothing left them after destruction of their village by the Communist guerrillas several years earlier.

A later April day found us again in Tripolis. On the road we had once more been encountering flocks from Valtetsi, but this time they were headed up toward home. Fortunately, Stephanos Agriopoulos, our favorite waiter in the Reed Restaurant, had relatives in Valtetsi and was eager to take us there. We left the main highway at the new tuberculosis hospital, turning toward the mountains on our right. The road was barely passable, evidently the mere widening of a sheep track winding in and out but always up, along the edges of dry, bone dry, ravines. Now and then one of us had to get out to shove a rock from the road. En route Stephanos told us much about the people and the hard economic struggle they were facing. The road became less rocky as we neared the village. There were small fields, brilliant green, with trees along the edges. The trees stood tall around the school and church, the center of the village, where their spring freshness and sturdiness cast a sort of tender protection over the ruined stone houses that were Valtetsi. It was only after we let the people unburden themselves of their more immediate troubles, such as rebuilding their houses, that we could turn to a description of their customary semiannual migration with their flocks.

Valtetsi, with its one hundred eighty families, had not suffered under the German occupation as had so many other Greek villages. Completely off any reasonable facsimile of a road, it was not visited by the invaders; but for this very reason it was frequented by the Communist guerrillas in the 1940s as they struggled for control of Greece. The Communist leaders repeatedly tried to persuade the people to join their side, but the Valtetsi residents refused. In anger at this refusal and with the words, "if you are not for us, you are against us," the Communists descended upon the village one day and killed about one hundred people, mostly men. They burned most of the houses and took the women and children off with them. Each man to whom we talked had some personal tragedy to relate and could show us the name of some close relative or friend on the marble monument by the church erected in honor of these victims of the Communist guerrillas. As a constant reminder of that terrible day, the houses still stood in ruins — six years later. We went from house to house and found that through lack of lumber the second stories had not been built back, nor had there been tile available for the roofs. Many of the families were holed in, as it were, on the first floor, pretty much exposed to the elements during the six months of their sojourn "at home." Yet the people were friendly, glad to see us. Their mobile faces were alive. They smiled easily, were full of curiosity, and bubbled with wit. The state of dilapidation was even more noticeable when the village secretary and president, in order to give us a drink of ouzo "for the road," had to ferret out a bottle and a few

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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have not reached. They also help in the gathering of olives, grapes, and many other products requiring patient labor.

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The woman is increasingly being viewed today as a supplementary source of labor in the fields, to be employed only when the need is urgent, although regional variations are still important. When she does go to the field, she may take the baby and the small children along and care for them as she works. Various explanations are offered for this lightening of field labor by women. Today, more of the village women have seen how the city women live and have resolved to put city ways into practice in their homes and villages. Furthermore, men seem to be showing more interest in their farms due to the help the government is giving in providing fruit trees, opening up of farm-to-market roads, and helping the peasant participate more actively in the national economy. Agricultural and home-economics extension workers, who now visit the majority of villages, not only tell the men that it is their job to do the field work, but they also show the men better methods for reducing the work load. Where tractors exist, the woman is relieved of much field work and can occupy herself with other tasks. She works more on her loom, takes care of her children, and cleans her house. She also has more time for gardening on a plot fairly close to the house. One recognizes the need for this in a place such as Ioannina (Epirus) where peasants in the outlying villages, with plenty of land near their house, buy at the city market vegetables which they could have grown at home if the women had had sufficient time.

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Keeping the Family Well

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Work, however, is not the only responsibility of a Greek housewife. Any ailing person becomes the immediate concern of the mother or the mother-in-law, with the older woman usually considered wiser in the mysteries of folk medicine. The patient also becomes the concern of the neighbors for, as one man put it, "when somebody gets sick, everybody goes to visit him and to look after him." For quite understandable reasons, the living standards of rural Greece are far below those found in Athens or in most countries of the West. Consequently, health practices, many of them surrounded with superstitions, are the outgrowth of the experience of people who for centuries have faced pain, illness, and death without the benefits of the accumulated medical discoveries of the modern world.

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Indeed, for much illness the peasant has a supernatural rather than a scientific explanation. As one writer has put it:

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> The whole of popular medicine is based upon the knowledge of charms and incantations. Many simples and drugs are of course known and employed; but it is still generally believed, as it was in the old time, that "there would be no good in the herb without the incantation." For the most ordinary diseases are

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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17. A monk on the ageless journey to Salamís with casks from his monastery to be filled or to sell.

18. Godparents hold the child before the priest for a controlled moment in the exuberance of a baptism, Macedonia.

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1:Sanders Z-514 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

177 eral ways, and one of the most interesting impacts this body made upon
464 the villages was the program promoted by one of their officials, Glen Leet.
653 It was termed *pronoia dia tes ergassias*, often translated "welfare through employment," which made it possible for villagers to work on some useful community project and be paid minimal wages for their labor. This not only brought some much-needed cash into poor areas but resulted also in actual physical accomplishments which people could see and in which they could take pride. This program, of course, was supplementary to the customary "voluntary" or unpaid labor (*prosopike ergassia*), usually ten days, which able-bodied villagers are supposed to contribute to the community upon call of the community council.[8]

177 Mention has already been made of a few efforts of the American Mission
207 to Greece — whether called Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA),
491 Mutual Security Administration (MSA), Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), or International Cooperation Administration (ICA). One of these was the attempt to set up radio receiving sets in the most isolated Greek villages so the people there would feel in touch with the outside world; another was the vast road-building program which has left its mark not only upon the Greek countryside but upon the Greek social structure as well. Physical isolation has been broken down on a scale not dreamed possible in the prewar years.

177 The American Mission is also largely responsible for the speeded-up
178 mechanization occurring in Greek agriculture in the 1950s. The same holds
[241] true for greatly expanded drainage and irrigation projects which increased the
[654] production of cotton and rice. To credit the American Mission with these and other developments does not reflect upon Greek ingenuity and desire for progress, for all of these programs were carried out by Greeks and through Greek agencies, but the outside financial and technical assistance had to be present for any large-scale success. A sober evaluation of American aid to Greece is found in a book by that title, written by A. A. Munkman, who was chief of Audits and Surveys of the United States Economic Mission to Greece.[9] While citing the positive achievements, he also inquires into how the two billion dollars supplied could have been better used for the benefit of the Greek people. He deals none too gently with some of the administrative weaknesses and concludes pessimistically that Western influence is steadily losing ground, because the ordinary Greek peasant or worker feels that it promises far more than it fulfills. This goes back, he thinks, to the fact that public opinion is poorly informed about the mechanics of aid.

Without necessarily taking issue with Munkman's conclusion, it is important to point out that, by their very nature, programs of planned change invariably raise peasant expectations beyond the sponsors' ability to satisfy. This need not be a negative fact if the dissatisfaction can be channeled into

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Vasilika

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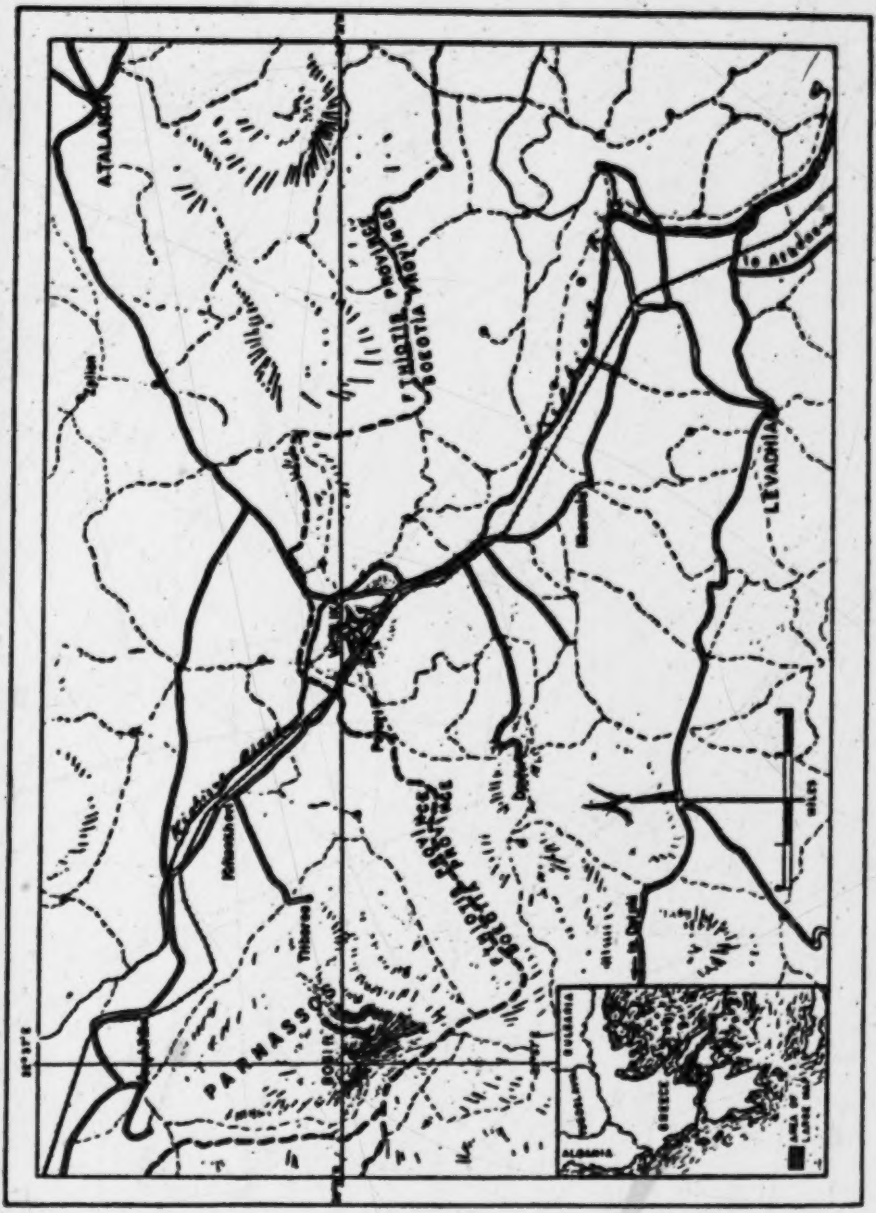

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Vasilika

the community. The secretary tends to remain in office for many years, thereby becoming the equivalent of a permanent civil servant.

The president is held responsible for the completion of the tasks assigned to him and to his council. These include registration of births and deaths, a census of males every five years, the physical maintenance of the roads and public wells in the village, the preparation of the community tax rolls, and the preparation of an annual village budget.

In a community the size of Vasilika the maintenance of vital statistics is not an onerous task, since births, deaths, and the age and sex distribution of the population are matters of common knowledge. The maintenance of village property is a more complicated matter. Funds for materials are available in the village's account, which is held by the treasury at Amphiklia. The community may not draw on its account without the approval of the nomarch. Therefore, any public works program in the vilage is first formulated by the council and then sent for final approval to the nomarch's office. Village males who are more than fifteen years old are responsible for providing labor for road building and for minor repairs of village propety. They may either give a certain number of days a year to work on such pubic projects or fulfill the obligation by furnishing money for a substitute. There is no effective practical way of enforcing adherence to the commitment. The state of the village roads and wells depends, therefore, on whether the village men are willing to work together to create a village asset.

In the course of our 1955-1956 stay at Vasilika a special impetus for road repairs presented itself. The council had requested that one bus a day traveling between Kifisokhori and Levadha be rerouted so as to pass through the village. The nomarch had indicated that he would approve the change if the village road was repaired, and he authorized the necessary materials. One day in March, truckloads of earth were brought into the village and about one quarter of the adult male population shoveled the loose earth into the main ruts on the village road. The road was superficially improved thereby, and a month or so later a bus was routed through the village. The poor drainage from one of the wells was not corrected, however, so that the regular spillage from the well quickly restored the old puddles in the road.

The men and boys who worked on the road project lacked their customary vigor. Indeed, the majority of the male population of the village claimed to have work to do in the fields that day and did not join in the road work at all. There was much joking, teasing, and clowning while the work was going on, and the efforts of two of the older men to convince the group to set to work with a will were unavailing. The attitude of the road workers requires explanation because all the villagers were agreed on the importance of the new bus route and they actively dislike mud. The muddiness of the village road in winter and early spring was a particular subject for comment and several times evoked the question, "Do you have mud in America, too?" An Athenian who visited the village in late spring was critical of the villagers because their *agbora* was unpaved. "Don't you have a lot of mud all winter?" she asked. "Oh no, we don't have any mud in winter. Very little," was the reponse from one of the villagers. He would not even admit to so unsightly a condition.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

653 461 491 The reluctance of the villagers to work on the road seems to result not from a lack of motivation but rather from a more compelling distaste for manual labor, and especially for such work when it does not directly or immediately benefit each man's own family. Several years later when a new school was built, some of the parents of the school children helped with parts of the construction. The other villagers did not.

651 623 The preparation of the community tax rolls is an important responsibility of the village council. Since taxes are based on land tenure, on produce, and on livestock ownership, the council must prepare lists of people who own land within the boundaries of the *kinotis*. The lists include for each person information on the number of *stremata* in each parcel of land he owns, on the kind of crop raised on each parcel, and on the quality of the land. Lists of the number of horses, mules, sheep, and goats owned by each villager are also compiled. Donkeys and chickens are not taxed and no listing is made of them. The tax is calculated for each item and the completed tax rolls are posted. A villager may feel that he has been unfairly treated, that, for example, the quality of his vineyard has been overestimated or that he has fewer sheep than the number listed. In [627] such a case he can request a revision from the council. His request is usually granted and that settles the matter. If he is not satisfied, he may ask for a hearing before a grievance committee, the members of which are proposed by the council from among the villagers. Any decision of the committee is subject to [634] the veto of the nomarch. In Vasilika disputes over tax rolls are said not to occur, 651 and no grievance committee has been established for many years. There had 628 been a dispute with Parori in the 1930's over the boundaries of the two communities. Since each *kinotis* receives taxes from the land within its boundaries the 692 question of where one *kinotis* begins and the other ends is of considerable importance. The argument between the two villages was finally settled in the courts.

641 651 621 233 [622] In connection with the preparation of tax rolls, the president has some power over the shepherds living in the community. Anyone classified as a nonresident of Vasilika must pay double the rate for pasturing his animals there. If no permission has been granted, he must pay triple the rate for residents. The question of when and if the new settlers in Vasilika—the shepherds, who had been living there since 1950—would be considered residents of Vasilika, that is, full-fledged citizens of the *kinotis*, was of significance both to the village and to the shepherds. They were finally granted this privilege in 1959.

423 651 [623] [583] The actual process of preparing the tax rolls consists of a series of agreements among the villagers, including their council members, as to what amount of property they will declare. In consequence, the tax rolls do not necessarily represent an accurate and complete accounting of property ownership in the *kinotis*. Farmers often try to hide some of their holdings and keep some of their transactions quiet. For example, in order to pay less in taxes on the value of dowries, the cords may show the transfer of a smaller parcel of land to the groom than the one privately agreed on and later privately carried out. Records [652] are probably being kept more accurately now, since credit from the Agricultural Bank is based on land holdings, and proof of ownership must be given to the bank.

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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494 interior of the vehicle, there were others who had with less formality installed themselves amidst the multitudinous array of baggage, livestock and firearms which renders every Greek bus incapable of passing beneath what used, in England at least, to be described as 'a low
491 bridge'. To the north of Drama the road crosses a dusty plain for
[669] several kilometres and then turns sharply to the right between two high peaks and winds laboriously up a rocky defile. Every few hundred yards there was a bridge: either guarded by a block-house, manned by men of the mobile section of the home-guard, or else lying in ruins and necessitating a perilous descent into a dried-up water course. These occasional outposts apart, we saw no human habitation for the best part of another twenty kilometres, when we reached the head of the pass. Here we halted for a few minutes and refreshed ourselves with cold mountain water from a stream by the roadside. Shortly after three
[726] o'clock we began the descent into the well-watered plateau, within sight of the Bulgarian frontier, on the northern fringe of which lies the village of Kato Nevrokopi, and which had been the scene of bitter fighting when the Germans poured into Greece in April, 1941. A few
346 minutes later we were among the houses of Nevrokopi and my fellow-
727 passengers pointed out to me the cottage, in no way distinguishable
793 from its neighbours save by the board bearing the Byzantine eagles and the inscription *ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΥΡΟΚΟΠΙΟΥ* beside the door, which, *faute de mieux*, has served as the bishop's headquarters since 1945: the old metropolis having been destroyed during the Bulgarian occupation of eastern Macedonia.

574 Half-past three on a warm August afternoon not being a discreet
[52] hour at which to call on a Greek bishop, I retired to the green shade of a vine beside the *plateia* to sip coffee and discuss such varied topics as the Bishop of Birmingham, Schiller and the Scottish liturgy (and, inevitably, the incredible folly of the British electorate in banishing Mr. Churchill to the opposition benches), with the commanding officer of the gendarmerie and other local celebrities. Meanwhile, a troop of small boys was despatched at regular intervals to reconnoitre in the vicinity of the
[513] metropolis. At half-past four it was reported that the windows were open (all true Greeks sleep with windows and shutters firmly closed), and I was thereupon escorted to the metropolis where I was warmly welcomed by the Bishop. We talked until a little after six o'clock,
796 when the *ephemerios*, or curate, of the parish arrived to lead the way to
788 church for evensong.

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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monks still further reduced to twenty-one. A decade of war has added a catastrophic chapter to this melancholy tale of gradual decline, for it was not possible that the monks should remain aloof from the calamities which have befallen their native land during those terrible years. The day was long since flown when the monks could look down from the security of their rocky retreats upon scenes of slaughter and pillage as armies came and went on the plain below; and, turning away with the sign of the cross and a *Kyrie eleison*, go back to their labours. The unscalable heights were impregnable no longer.

I spent several days at the monasteries in January 1950, accompanied by a young theologian from the Russian Academy in Paris. Heavy falls of snow had blocked the Metsovo pass—the one road that leads north-westwards from Kalambaka across the heights of Pindos, connecting the plain of Thessaly with Ioannina and Epirus—and the cold was intense. We had slept the previous night at Trikkala, where the Metropolitan had shown us a number of charred manuscripts which had been salvaged from the monasteries. Our first concern upon reaching Kalambaka the following morning was to seek out the curate of the place, Father Christos Benda, whom we discovered wrapped in a blanket at his fireside. He was not a little startled at the sudden apparition of two Frankish visitors in the doorway of his cottage, and regarded somewhat gloomily our proposal to sleep at the monasteries for the duration of our stay, assuring us (not without reason, as we subsequently discovered), that the monks had little enough bedding to protect their own persons from the bitter winds which swept the exposed summits. He promised, nevertheless, to come with us to look for the *Igoumenos* of the Great Meteoron who was said to have descended from his airy retreat that morning in order to deal with some piece of monastic business. First, however, we were taken to see the fourteenth-century basilica with its remarkable marble *ambon*, and to visit the school, where we found classes of 150 children overflowing the one available building (which had perforce to serve as primary school in the forenoon and as high school for the rest of the day), and packed into two small chapels which had been furnished with desks. The children were delighted at the diversion caused by the appearance of the *xenoi*. Papa Christos carried us off in search of the abbot who was finally run to earth in a tavern where, monastic business satisfactorily despatched, he was disposing of a dish of vegetables.

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

A MACEDONIAN DIOCESE

During the weeks which followed I had occasion to correspond with this prelate as to the state of his diocese, and received a pressing invitation to come and see for myself the desperate conditions resulting from eight years of all but continuous warfare.

Some months went by before an opportunity presented itself, and then one morning in February, 1950, found me travelling westwards from Kozani in a jeep belonging to the 2nd Army Corps. When I had last come this way, the previous March, we had been constrained to travel in convoy: a seemingly endless line of heavy army trucks laden with provisions, fodder and ammunition for the outlying garrisons of northern Pindos. It had been the eve of the festival of the Annunciation —which is also the day on which Greece commemorates the raising of the standard of revolt by the Archbishop of Patras in 1821—and every vehicle was decked with evergreens and plastered with patriotic slogans:

ΖΗΤΩ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ
ΖΗΤΩ ΤΟ ΕΘΝΟΣ
ΖΗΤΩ Ο ΣΤΡΑΤΟΣ.

The wild, mountainous tract of country that lies south and west of Kozani is a desolate region at all times, and never more so than in early February when the outworks of the great fortress of Pindos are veiled in snow, and icy winds scour the exposed valley which leads westward away from the haunts of men. A mile or two from Siatista the road forked and we turned southwards out of the teeth of the wind, the lightly-laden jeep lurching and jolting over the deeply-scored, rock-strewn surface of a truly Hellenic road—"the worst road in all Macedonia", the driver assured me with emphasis.

At Grevena—set drab and cheerless amongst low hills, the gaunt ruin of the orphanage dark against the sky—boulders gave place to mud. It lapped about us as we turned out of the market, where I had a fleeting glimpse of whiskered *papades* in rusty cassocks sprawled round a table amidst the dull gleam of copper pans and cauldrons. A veritable sea of mud, churned by the wheels of heavy vehicles, stretched unbroken from the steps of the regimental headquarters towards the broken line of ramshackle dwellings beyond the river.

Here on the furthermost fringe of Macedonia the road was swallowed up in the muddy deeps; beyond the cottages lay the massive rampart of Pindos, traversed only by mule-tracks winding high among the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

snows, westwards towards Metsovo and Epirus. To the southward a few paths—impassable save on foot during the winter months—gave access to Kalambaka and the plains of Thessaly.

After paying my respects to the colonel in command of the garrison I plunged afresh into the inland sea and struck out for the metropolis: a simple cottage where the Bishop rented a couple of rooms. The Lord Theokletos—a monumental figure in an ungirt robe of indigo—looked strangely out of place in such a setting. The Friday fast was waived out of regard to the presence of a traveller, and when we had eaten the Metropolitan told me something of the state of his diocese. It was a gloomy picture that he outlined.

Owing to the remoteness of the district and its poor communications almost every village had been abandoned by its inhabitants from 1947 till the summer of 1949. Grevena itself, a comopolis with a pre-war population in the region of 3,500, had, for more than two years, sheltered five times that number of refugees. During the past six months it had been possible for the people to return to certain villages situated in the northern part of the diocese, but there were reputed to be more than 2,000 families still living in the great refugee camp on the southern fringes of the town, and sixty-four of the diocese's ninety-six villages were still, after three years, uninhabited. Many of the fugitives had fled southwards to Kalambaka, Trikkala and Larissa; others had sought refuge in Kozani.

The refugees had included seventy-five parish priests, only sixteen of whom had as yet been able to return to their villages. Two priests had been done to death by the Germans; three others, as well as three monks, murdered by the Communists. As recently as October, 1949, the solitary occupant of the monastery of St. Athanasius, close to the village of Trikomon, had returned home after two years' exile, despite the advice of the Bishop and others who counselled him to wait two or three months longer, only to be brutally murdered within the space of a few days. It was when matters were at their worst that the Bishop formed his clerical militia and drilled his venerable warriors in the square where stands the monument to his predecessor in the see of Grevena, the Metropolitan Aimilianos, who had suffered death at the hands of the Turks in 1911 and is revered in this region as a martyr. This redoubtable force had never been called upon to take the field against the Accursed of God, but, said the Lord Theokletos, it had served as an example.

As to the destruction of churches, it seemed that some months must

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

Hill Villages

KOTTA

621 [361] Kotta is situated in the far northwestern corner of Greece, about five miles from the Albanian border, and not more than fifteen miles from the point where Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece adjoin. Flowing past the village is a small stream which [133] in due course descends to join the Aliakmon River. The valley [311] slopes are steep, and the villagers possess only 500 stremmata (125 acres) of arable soil. Much of this is thin patches on the hillsides; of good bottom land the community has less than ten acres.

722 669 [731] When I visited the village in 1947, the inhabitants were starving. Seemingly innumerable children peeped out from every house, many of them showing bloated bellies beneath motley rags that served as clothing but scarcely covered their nakedness. The village was then in the hands of the guerrillas, who had stationed a detachment of fifteen boys (the eldest was not more than eighteen) in the community. The ordinary speech [191] was Slavic, and at least some of the villagers felt that it would [619] be better for them if their village belonged to Yugoslav Macedonia. Macedonian national feeling may have played some part in this attitude, but probably the major determinant was the knowledge that conditions across the border were not quite so hard as those they faced in Greece.

The people of Kotta were, indeed, living under war conditions. [491] The Greek army had blocked the main road between Florina and Kastoria, which runs not far from the village site, and no vehicles could pass without special permits; men could still get through on foot by taking off across open country, but there was little incentive to do so. Work could not be found [464] down in the plains, and a man from Kotta, with the trace of a Slavic accent in his Greek, was courting arrest or a beating if he

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kotta

[Hill Villages]

727 62 example. I even saw two fine Swiss watches on the wrists of young men dressed in homespun.

[571] [657] In the immediate postwar period, Kotta benefited somewhat from government help. The villagers were given glass to repair the windows of their houses, and some lumber for doors and window frames, so that their houses are in better repair today than in 1947. In 1954 a stout stone bridge was built across the [491] stream with government funds, and the villagers made a rude road to connect Kotta with the outside world. Vehicles can therefore come into the village, though few come, since the villagers have little need of anything from beyond their own small valley.

[241] [233] Their agriculture is much the same as before, with corn almost the sole crop. The village flock of sheep is slowly growing back to prewar proportions, thanks in part to the government's having given each family four sheep as a start. The [492] village also has a few cattle – another government gift – which not only yield milk but are harnessed to the plows as well. All this represents a return to familiar patterns.

x 178 241 233 [242] The only agricultural innovation that has so far come to Kotta is the experimental sowing of alfalfa on one of the good acres of bottom land. This measure was recommended to the village by a government extension agent in the hope of remedying one of the crying weaknesses of its traditional economy – the lack of winter fodder for animals. Leaves cut from trees and dried cornstalks have been normal winter fare for cattle and sheep; and since the village stands more than two thousand feet above sea level, the winter is both long and severe. As a result the animals emerge thin and weak from the winter months. Yet the villagers are not altogether convinced that the new crop is worth while. Alfalfa was planted for the first time in 1955, and while it did help to feed the cattle, the new crop occupied one of the best pieces of bottom land the village possesses, where

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kotta

[Hill Villages]

621 regretted the loss of five of his own whom the guerrillas had
161 taken. Yet he was fortunate in having one child still with him,
842 a girl who was too young to leave her mother when the guerrillas took the older children. As for the attitudes of the younger generation in the village, I could not satisfy myself. In the presence of their elders, they generally kept quiet, and certainly refrained from any overt dissent. Whether they, too, shared the traditional view that the more children one has the better off one is (assured thereby of God's blessing and of sustenance in old age), I could not tell.

CHERASIA

621 Cherasia is a village in Thessaly near the base of Mount
361 Pelion, some six air miles from Volos, the fourth city of Greece.
[491] Along the winding road, however, it lies about twelve miles from Volos; and before 1952 the only road connection with the village required a detour of about twenty-four miles around the
[173] mountain. The community is an old one. Local tradition holds
[433] that it was founded 680 years ago. Until the Germans destroyed
[233] the "upper" village in 1943, the community led a semi-migratory life, spending the summer months high up the mountain where a natural spring supplied water, and coming down to the foot of the mountain only in winter, when the flocks could pasture on the stubble of other villages' grain fields. The villagers looked upon the upper village as their real home, the lower one as only a temporary shelter.

x 178 The traditional occupations of the village were sheepherding
433 and charcoal burning. Once upon a time, sixty or seventy years
233 ago, the main support of the community may well have been
314 sheep, pastured on the rough mountain in summer, and on grain
[438] stubble in the winter. Then, by degrees, charcoal burning and woodcutting became more important. Two factors presumably

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

city, was almost idle, so that serious unemployment was endemic in Volos, thus effectively blocking the easiest and most immediate escape for the hillsmen of Cherasia. In the Thessalian plain, villages like Lofiscos have not developed their agriculture to a level of intensity that would offer seasonal employment on a significant scale. Hence, for the time being the people of Cherasia are caught in a net scarcely of their own devising. At the same time they are stubbornly and angrily doing little or nothing to help themselves. It is not a hopeful situation, and if the general political climate of Greece should change, another guerrilla band could very likely be recruited from Cherasia without difficulty and at a moment's notice.

166 621 433 464 [669]

KARDAMILI

Kardamili lies on the sea, and can thus be described as a hill village only by looking inland, where high and barren hillsides rise abruptly from the coast, with only a small stream and a miniature delta to explain the location of the community. It is situated on the west coast of the central peninsula of the southern Peloponnese. Just to the south lies the wild and desolate country of Mani, a region where tribal organization and blood feud lasted into the twentieth century.

621 [361] [133]

Kardamili raises a little wheat in the stream delta, but its major crop is olives. The rocky hillsides are covered with trees, skillfully planted in crevices and pockets of soil, many of which have been created artificially by terracing. The villagers reckon that they produce enough wheat to supply the community for about four months in the year; the rest has to be imported with money gained through the sale of olive oil.

621 433 [241] [438]

Before the war, Kardamili added to its strictly agricultural resources by acting as a commercial center for a number of inland villages. They, too, exported olive oil, together with a few

[366] [438] [491]

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

animals; and before roads were built, these villages brought their surplus on donkey-back (or on the hoof) to Kardamili, where it was put on board a small ship, and carried either to Athens or to Kalamata, the local metropolis, some thirty-five miles away on the rich Messenian plain. In addition, an oil-pressing plant was constructed in 1929 in Kardamili which employed as many as a hundred persons at the height of the season. Even when there were no olives to press, the plant kept open the year around by making soap and other products.

This was the basis upon which about 750 people were able to make a living in the village before the war. In recent years, however, the village has not prospered. The oil factory closed down permanently in 1940, depriving the village of what had been one of its most important resources. After the war, a new road, built in 1949–50, destroyed the importance of the port. Instead of bringing their olives to Kardamili on donkey-back and selling them there, the peasants of the hinterland loaded their produce directly onto trucks bound for Kalamata or Athens.

The new system was an obvious improvement on older methods of transport and marketing; but it meant that Kardamili, which for a few years between the wars had struggled toward becoming a miniature town, was compelled to sink back to a purely village status. One manifestation of this change is a decrease in population. In 1940, the village had about 750 inhabitants; in 1956 the population totaled only 512. War losses were insignificant, although guerrillas did kill two persons from the village. The whole community was forcibly evacuated to Kalamata in 1949 to prevent its exploitation by guerrilla bands that ranged even this far south. The evacuation was perhaps scarcely justified, however, since the guerrillas never again came near, and when the villagers returned in 1950 they found their houses intact.

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makes it easy for the farmers to sell their agricultural products at fairly good prices. The road built during the first war by the Allied armies is still in use and provides good transportation facilities. The same roads may be in use today by the same soldiers. The nearest market is eight kilometers from which most of the goods are bought. Once a week there is a bazaar in this market and on Tuesday of every week another bazaar is held in the nearby village of Herson.

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The old Turkish village was very different than what we find it today. It had an old mosque, a pond in the center of the village, no running water but only wells, small two room sun-dried mud brick houses, with high walls around their yards, so as to protect their women from outside looks. The surrounding area of the village, which was used for cemeteries, was covered with huge pointed blocks of stones. This is because the Turks never buried their dead in the same tomb. They believed that the dead were living in an underground world by themselves and the /8/ heavier and the larger the stone the less chance the dead had to get up. From the number of such stones one could easily tell the number of years the Turks had occupied the village. The new settled refugees have used these stones for the foundations of their new houses and the ground was plowed for cereal raising. This spot being the richest of all the land of the surrounding territory, a very small portion was given to each refugee farmer. Here the fields are 1/8 of an acre. The only cereal that can stand this rich soil without being lodged is barley, which is pastured from December to March and still gives more yield than any other field of the same size. Nothing is lost in the world. Cemeteries are the best sources of nitrogen and phosphorus.

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When the Turks were living in this village they were fewer in proportion to the land and so they could raise more livestock since they had more pasture land. With the increased number of refugees the livestock pasturing was more difficult.

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Boundaries and Neighborhoods of the village. 621

Megali Vrisi itself falls into six neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are on the basis of kinship relationships. There are two in the Thracian section and four in the Caucasian section. The village has nearby villages such as Metallikon, South East 1 1/2 miles, Vaptistis, South West 1 3/4 miles, Castanies, 2 miles North West, and North East is Stayrohori, 1 1/2 miles. There is a hard-surfaced road which connects all these villages to Megali Vrisi. 628 361 491

A people of the Soil and their Mobility for the last 25 Years. 167 722

In spite of the fact that the people of Megali Vrisi are a people of the soil, yet some of them were the victims of the great destructive waves of war. The Caucasians were rather stable in their own country, and this forced movement, due to communism, was the first of its kind in their lives for many generations. The un-/11/fortunate Thracians, because of their position in the much fought Balkan states, had to move very regularly from their village. I was often told that this was the fourth village they were building in less than 14 years, due to the Greco-Turkish war, the Greco-Bulgarian war, the first world war and the war of 1920 between Turkey and Greece. After the end of each war the survivors would return back to their village from their place of exile. One could almost read in their faces the effect of the hardships they had been through. The effect is noticed by the type of life they developed which has already become a part of their whole philosophy of living in this world. Small temporary houses--not much furniture, no mattresses, a straw mat and two heavy hand woven blankets for cover--a kettle to cook in, one common bowl for the whole family to eat in, one suit of clothes and few implements. In case of forced movement the wife and the husband are able to carry everything they have on their backs. Usually mobility makes a person cosmopolitan-minded and good mannered, but it had the opposite effect on these people. This may be due to the conditions under which they had to move. [648] 511 167